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SUBJECT: CAMEROON INPUT FOR CONGRESSIONAL REPORT ON FISCAL
TRANSPARENCY

REF: STATE 16737

1. (SBU) The following information is keyed to questions in
reftel:

--Is Cameroon's Budget Made Public?

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the Government of Cameroon
(GRC) publishes an overview of projected expenditures, indicating
how the GRC intends to spend money at the Ministry-level.
Cameroonian citizens are able to obtain information about budget
execution, but it is difficult to do so and not all expenditure
details are available.

-- If so, through what medium (e.g., publication, internet)?

The budget plan is published in newspapers and made widely
available. Details of how funds are actually spent are not widely
distributed. Post is aware that civil society groups have succeeded
in accessing spending details for the Ministries of Education, for
example, but only after extensive effort.

-- Are all revenues and expenditures included in the
publicly-available budget?

No. The publicly available budget includes only projections and
these are at the Ministry level. The GRC provides regular updates
about the rate of budget execution over the course of the fiscal
year, but this information includes only percentage breakdowns of
the level of recurrent spending and investment executed at the end
of the semester.

-- If the revenues and expenditures are available in a
publicly-available budget, how meaningful and accurate is the
information?

Cameroon's public budget plan is often not reflective of budget
execution. Publicly available information about budget execution
can be misleading in part due to management practices that obscure a
given agency's expenditures and future spending commitments.

-- If a country is weak on fiscal transparency is it due to capacity
or lack of will?

Cameroon's capacity to manage its budget is severely limited. Over
the last few years, the GRC has demonstrated willingness to improve
management of the budget and outside observers agree that much
progress has been made. Political will is as factor as well,
however, as neither government officials nor public citizens are
well versed in the concepts of fiscal transparency and public
accountability. The current Minister of Finance has demonstrated a
strong political will to improve financial management and
accountability.

-- Are there any USG programs to strengthen the host country's capacity to develop sound fiscal policies and that support transparency and good governance?

The USG's ability to strengthen Cameroon's capacity to improve the fiscal regime is severely restrained by the lack of funding for such projects. Nevertheless, the Embassy provided Democracy and Human Rights Fund support to Dynamique Citoyenne, a civil society organization, to conduct "budget tracking," obtaining details of budget expenditures and conducting field verification studies. Members of Dynamique Citoyenne were able to obtain the expenditure details (about school construction) only with difficulty and found that projects were often not completed. Additionally, the U.S. Embassy engages in forward-leaning public diplomacy to advocate for greater management of public resources. In an effort to apply pressure for improved accountability, the US Embassy continues to look for ways to apply the punitive measures called for under Presidential Proclamation 7750, creating new ineligibilities for corrupt individuals under Section 212f of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

-- Are other donor countries or multilateral institutions (e.g. the EU or World Bank) providing assistance in these areas?

The European Union, IMF and World Bank are heavily engaged in Cameroon's efforts to improve fiscal management and transparency.

-- Has the country volunteered for the IMF to report on the country's compliance with standards and codes covering fiscal transparency?

A Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC) on Cameroon's fiscal transparency and transparency of monetary and financial policies was issued on June 16, 2000. The data module of

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the ROSC was issued on August 24, 2001 (CR/01/150). Post does not have further information about Cameroon's participation.

12. (U) Post welcomes this renewed interest in fiscal transparency, an issue that is critical to Cameroon's development challenges. Post point of contact for this issue is Poloff Clinton "Tad" Brown, BrownCS@state.gov; (237)22-20-15-00 extension 4070.